

Tradewinds 2010.

Approximately 450 security force personnel from the United States, Jamaica, the United Kingdom, and 14 other Caribbean nations are currently in the historic town of Port Royal conducting an international military cooperation exercise called Tradewinds 2010.

The manoeuvres are conducted annually by Caribbean Basin Partner Nations sponsored by the US Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) to improve cooperation and interoperability of partner nations in responding to regional security threats.

Miami-based US Marine Corps Forces, South, is the executive agent for the exercise.

Tradewinds is primarily a maritime operations exercise that also supports USSOUTHCOM's security cooperation objectives and exercises the assets and capability provided under the Enduring Friendship programme.

Enduring Friendship, a USSOUTHCOM-sponsored programme to build maritime security capabilities throughout the Caribbean, is now marking its 26th year of operation.

In Jamaica, Tradewinds 2010 will focus on regional defence, highlighting maritime interdiction and search-and-rescue operations with an emphasis on command and control.

The programme also includes the provision of high-speed interceptor boats with extensive communication and surveillance capacity, as well as a command, control and communication package that links the US Joint Interagency Task Force-South with partner nations' operations centres to track and coordinate the seizure of illicit maritime traffic.

"The exercise will also help to improve key tactical skills in marksmanship, search-and-rescue, and maritime interdiction operations," said Major Eric Dominijanni, exercise coordinator, US Marine Corps Forces, South.

"The US and the Caribbean share common interests and regional challenges require cooperative solutions. We are committed to building lasting partnerships that will enhance our ability to work effectively together," he added.

Countries participating in Tradewinds 2010 are Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, United Kingdom and the United States.